ROBINSON CRUSOE'S ISLAND.

Frank G. Carpenter Gives a Description of Juan Fernandez as It is To-Day.

Valparaiso, Chili.—Robinson Crusoe's island is to be colonized. The government of Chili has just adopted resolutions to that effect, and by the time this letter shall have been published an inspector will have been appointed and in all probability a number of new inhabitants will have been carried to the island of Juan Fernandez. Within the past few weeks the president of Chili has visited this island on a tour of inspection, and both himself and his officials report that it can be made of great value to the county. It has been decided to give each settler a house and a certain amount of land, and the idea is to make a large fishing colony there. The codfish caught off the shores of Juan Fernandez are especially fine. They swarm about its shores, and, in connection with lobsters and other shell fish, might form the basis of a great industry. There are also many seals, walruses and other marine animals in the waters near by, and the mainland has in its woods many wild goats, with sheep and wild mules. There are parts of the island that are very fertile, and it is thought that they can readily be made a valuable property.

The island of Juan Fernandez lies just about 400 miles west of Valparaiso, in the South Pacific ocean. It can be reached only by special steamers which make excursions there once or twice a year, and it will not be possible for me to visit it at that time. I have, however, met members of the president's party who have just returned, and have also had the assistance of Mr. Spencer of Santiago, an American photographer who accompanied the expedition, and from whose photographs this article is illustrated. The island is bleaker and colder than Dr. Fox's picture of it. It is only twelve miles long by about seven miles wide, but parts of it are the picture of desolation. It is a great mass of rocks, which rise upwards from the waters for more than a thousand feet. It is made up of hills and mountains, of little ravines and valleys. The northern half of the island is covered with a dense vegetation, but the southern half is as bleak and bare as the western slopes of the Andes in the rear of the Peruvian desert. Most of the shores are inaccessible. The best landing place is at Cumberland bay, at which point there is now a fishing settlement, which includes about all the people of the island. There are, it is said, only fifteen people now living there. Back of the settlement on the bay there are cottages, or straw huts, which once formed the homes of a number of settlers who lived there. These huts are made of cane wattled with straw. There are gardens about some of them, and at one time there was an agricultural colony here. One man attempted to start a stock-raising plantation, and he had, it is said, as many as 30,000 head of cattle and an equal number of sheep grazing in the valleys on the north of the island. Of late, however, I am told that this business has almost entirely disappeared, the cattle are allowed to go wild and there are now on the island wild sheep, wild goats and wild mules. I give this statement on the authority of Photographer Spencer.

There is no doubt but that Juan Fernandez is a rich island as far as the soil of the northern part of it is concerned, and with this new colonizing scheme it may support quite a large number of people. The hills are covered now with wild oats, and there is good grass in every open spot. The fruit trees planted more than 100 years ago by Selkirk and others have reproduced themselves, and there are many wild fruits, while the grapes found in the woods are as delicious as those which Robinson Crusoe dried for raisins. There are peaches, pears and quinces growing wild, and also wild vegetables. A peculiar plant is the panga, which has leaves forming a cup as big as an umbrella. This fills with water when it rains and stays full as long as it is cloudy. When the sun comes out it begins to wilt and the water flows out.

Robinson Crusoe's Cave.

There are a number of caves on Juan Fernandez, and several are pointed out in which it is said that Alexander Selkirk lived. One of these, which lies in a ridge of volcanic rock, is as large as the average parlor, with a roof from ten to fifteen feet above the ground. The door to this cave is about fifteen feet high and its extent to the rear at least thirty feet. It shows signs of having been lived in. There are three little holes or pockets scraped out of the walls, such as are mentioned in Robinson Crusoe's description of his cave-home, and here and there on the walls are rusty nails used by those who have lived here in the past. It is said that the cave was the resort of the buccaneers who once ravaged the coasts and ships of this part of the world. Other caves are covered with ferns and the vegetation is so luxuriant that it is easy to imagine that Selkirk, like Robinson Crusoe, might have set out hedges about his caves, which would soon have become walls of trees and have hidden them from view.

There is a monument to Selkirk on the island of Juan Fernandez. It is a marble tablet set in the rocks at Robinson Crusoe's "Lookout." It was placed about thirty years ago. The inscription reads as follows:

In Memory of
Alexander Selkirk,
Mariner,
A native of Largo, in the County of Fife, Scotland, who lived on this Island in complete solitude four years and four months.

He was landed from the Cinque Ports galley, 36 tons, 18 guns, A. D. 1704, and was taken off in the Duke, privateer, 12th February, 1709.

He died Lieutenant of H. M. S. Weymouth, A. D. 1723, aged 47 years.

This tablet is erected near Selkirk's Lookout by Commodore Powell and the Officers of H. M. S. Topaze, A. D. 1868.

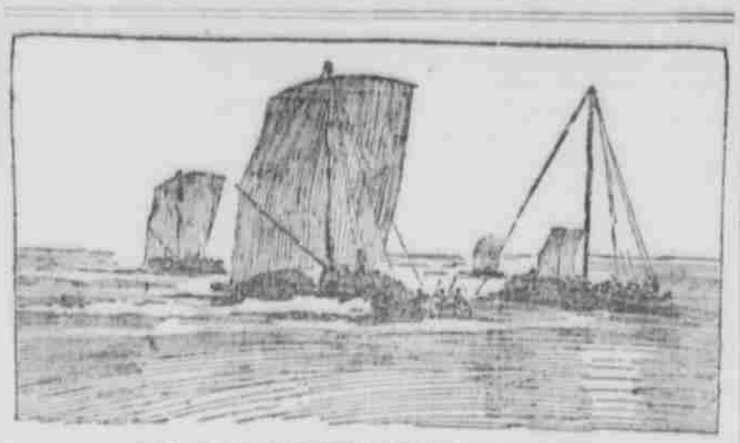
The Guano Islands.

Other interesting islands are found in the great archipelago which lies between here and Cape Horn. These I shall travel among on my way around the southern end of South America. The most interesting of all the Pacific islands, however, are the guano islands. They are, in proportion to their size, the richest islands of the world, for they have already added more than one billion dollars to the world's wealth. That is what Peru has dug out of her guano islands. Her creditors are getting something out of them to-day, although nothing like the enormous sums realized in the past. These guano islands are scattered all along the coast of Peru. I first saw them north of Lima, near the shores of Salaverry, and at Paramayo a guano ship from the Lobos islands came in for mail and provisions. Off the Bay of Pisco, Peru, I saw the famous Chincha islands, which have produced more than twelve million tons of guano, and have brought into the Peruvian treasury millions upon millions of dollars. The shipping of guano is going on from these islands to-day, although the deposits are to a large extent exhausted. I am told that the shipments of the current year will not probably exceed 30,000 tons.

The guano islands are merely masses of volcanic rocks which have risen up out of the ocean. The have not a blade of grass nor any green thing on them, and are merely rocky islands covered with a ragged white deposit. It never rains upon them, and for thousands of years the manure upon them lay and grew in quantity from age to age. For some reason or other the pelicans, sea gulls and other birds which feed by the millions in the waters of these parts of the world have chosen these islands as their nightly roosting places. They pick out certain of them and age after age, year after year, and night after night, they fly to them by the thousands and there rest. There are often other islands near which to all appearance are quite as desirable, but which are untouched. Even the disturbance caused by the removing of the guano does not seem to prevent the birds returning to their roost. On the Chincha islands, which are supposed to be entirely exhausted, fresh deposits of guano have recently been made, and in 1894 20,000 tons of new guano was actually shipped.

Where the Guano Comes from.

Nearly every one knows that guano is the excrement of birds. A sea gull, which is one of the smallest of the guano-producing birds, will drop from four to six ounces of excrement a day and in the breeding season of ten weeks about twenty-eight pounds. Other birds produce more, and the many little deposits throughout the ages have made these vast quantities. Guano has, however, other things mixed with it. The material taken from the beds is made up also of dead seals, who crawl upon the guano rocks to die. There are thousands of seal-skins mixed with the bird manure, and not long ago 500 tons of such skins were excavated from one guano deposit. The birds which make the guano are of many kinds. One of the chief species is the pelican. I have seen these ungainly, big-billed birds in such flocks that they fairly darkened the face of the ocean as they flew over it. They feed upon the fishes. The bills of the pelicans have great bags of yellow skin under them and they use these as nets to scoop up the fish. They are the gluttons of the sea and air, and often gorge themselves to such an extent that they cannot rise from the water, but remain there until sufficient of their food has digested to lighten their weight. About the Lobos islands there are always millions of pelicans. They seem to be sociable creatures and they hunt in flocks. The guano of the Lobos islands is found in pockets covered with layers of sand which often vary in thickness from two to fifteen feet. The



SAIL BOAT CARRYING GUANO TO STEAMER.

sand is shoveled off and the guano is then taken out. The guano is first loaded on trucks and carried on a tramway to the shore, where it is transferred to the ships, to be taken to Europe or America.

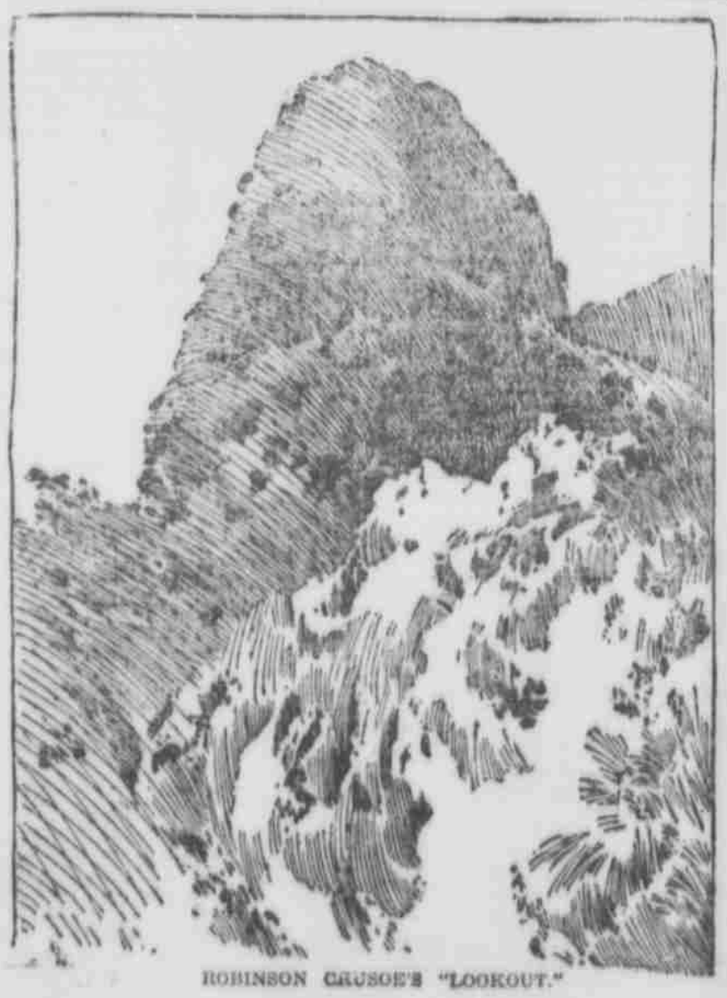
Claim for Hundreds of Millions.

When Humboldt visited South America, in 1804, he called attention to the value of the guano beds on the Chincha islands. They were then sixty feet deep, and he said there was enough manure on them to enrich the worn out lands of the old world. The deposits, however, were not thought to be of value by the Peruvians until nearly half a century later, when a Frenchman named Cochet called attention to them and claimed one-third of all the product by right of discovery. He traveled from place to place and picked out islands from which it is said that more than $1,200,000,000 worth of guano was sold. He was declared by the Peruvian congress as the true discoverer of the beds and uses of guano, and in 1849 a grant of 5,000 tons of guano was voted him. He never got it, however, and, although his claim by right of discovery, which, according to their Peruvian law, gave the discoverer one-third, aggregated over $400,000,000, he died in a poor house in Paris. Another discoverer of some of the guano islands was treated in the same way by the Peruvian government. This was a naturalized American citizen named Landreau. He discovered guano deposits which were worth about $400,000,000, and, according to the Peruvian law, should have had $133,000,000 for them. It was, it is said, through his discoveries that Peru was able to get a loan in Europe of $200,000,000, but when it came to the question of paying Landreau he was cut off without a cent. Just before the war between Chili and Peru a number of Americans had formed what was called the Peruvian company. They had bought up the rights of the heirs of Cochet and Landreau and were attempting to make the Peruvian government pay back something of the enormous sums claimed by them as heirs of Cochet and Landreau. It is from the prospectus of this company which was given me before leaving the United States by Col. Dick Thompson, our former secretary of the navy, that the above statements are taken. This prospectus was not intended to be given to the newspapers, and the extent of the scheme has, I think, never been published. Its advocates brought the matter before congress. Secretaries of State Fish and Evarts both made reports upon it, and President Hayes in one case called the attention of congress to it. It never made any headway out here, and it is now, I suppose, dead, for the guano islands were given over to the Peruvian corporation, an English syndicate, years ago as a part consideration of its assuming the Peruvian foreign debt. Peru is practically a bankrupt country, but when the claim was made it was rich, and the claimants expected to get at least a large part of the half billion dollars to which they said they were entitled under the law.

The Guano Beds of Today.

Guano is not worth so much to-day as it was years ago. The product is now comparatively nothing. Other fertilizers have taken its place, and its price is less than half what it once was. There have been times when this bird manure was sold for $100 a ton. To-day it can be bought, I am told, for $30 or $40 a ton. The first shipment to Europe was made more than fifty years ago. At that time twenty barrels of guano were taken to Liverpool and tried on a farm near that city. The result was such that orders were sent back for more, and soon hundreds of ships were employed in carrying guano to Europe. Often 200 ships would be at the different islands at one time. Chinese coolies were imported to get out the guano. For a long time the guano islands gave Peru the greater part of its revenues, yielding about $15,000,000 a year for a number of years. Now they are practically exhausted, and Peru has fallen from great riches to poverty.

FRANK G. CARPENTER.



ROBINSON CRUSOE'S "LOOKOUT."

Summer Logging Camp.

The summer logging camp ordinarily is not a picturesque place. It is built beside the railroad, in order that supplies need not be carried far by hand or by "dray." The various buildings, or "shanties," as they are always called, are clustered in a compact little village. Nearest the railroad, it may be, is the "cook's shanty;" next it, perhaps, is the "men's shanty," or sleeping quarters of the crew; near them again is the office, where the camp accounts are kept, and where the foreman and sealer sleep. The barn, or "hovel," is at the end of the camp, with the granary beside it. The blacksmith's shop, and the workbench of the "handy man," are near by. The "root cellar," which is both pantry and cold storage room, is built where the cook and his assistants have ready access to it. The cook's shanty is the dining room as well as kitchen, while the office is also a storehouse from which the timberjacks can obtain tobacco and such principal articles of clothing as they may need. All the chief buildings are long and low, made of rough boards or logs, and roofed with sheeting and tar paper. The sleeping bunks in the men's shanty are built along the side of the cabin in a tier two deep; this shanty is the loggers' rendezvous on cold evenings, and in it the smell of strong tobacco smoke constantly lingers. Such is a summer logging camp, and, rough and crude as it may seem, it is no bad home for men toughened by hard outdoor labor.

Hard Work on Nerves.

Sheriff Roper—Marnin', parsing They boys hev appointed me ter see ef I couldn't git you to officiate at the funeral of Snaky Joe this afternoon about 3 o'clock. Parson—I'll be there at that time or a little before. Sheriff Roper—All right, parsing; if yer think yer nerves kin stan' it. He'll be lynched promptly at 2:45. Thankee.—New York Weekly.

Good Reason.

The Bore—"Why don't you publish your circulation figures any more?" The Editor—"They are so big there isn't room for them in the paper."—Indianapolis Journal.

THE ENGLISH LORDS.

BRITISH PEERS HAVE THEIR UPS AND DOWNS.

Lord Kingsale's Brother—He Was Passing Round the Curry and Bombay Duck on a P. & O. Steamer—Waiter and Musician.

Everybody knows, of course, that the British peerage, like the British constitution and the little negress in "Uncle Tom's Cabin," rather "growed" than was designedly created. Were the fact less clearly ascertained one might almost fancy that it was planned by Providence with a special eye to the needs of the sensationalist, says London Telegraph. The rule peculiar to our own nobility that every one but the actual holder of a title for the time being is in contemplation of law a commoner introduces an element of romance into human life by providing numberless possibilities of sudden vicissitudes of fortune which could in hardly any other manner be so picturesquely brought about. Sudden successions to great wealth are, of course, romantic incidents in their way; but as the world grows richer and as more and more American, African and other fortune-seekers blossom into millionaires in the course of a few weeks or days—only, perhaps, to subside into bankrupts within a few months—the interest of the public in these ups and downs of prosperity and adversity has become a little blunted and its capacity for wondering at them somewhat dulled.

When a man may be a beggar one day and a "king" of some product or other, be it diamonds or bacon, the next, one gets at last to regard the transformation as commonplace. But once a peer always a peer—the change from low to high estate is for life, and when it is a change of a very extraordinary character it will always have about it a touch of the magical. When Fate, without a moment's warning, places a coronet on the brow of the caretaker of the town hall, as happened the other day, a new relish is undoubtedly given to human life. We feel that after that anything may happen, that we may be entertaining viscounts unawares in every sort of obscure capacity and that at any moment the humdrum course of modern existence may be broken by the discovery that the milkman is a marquis or the butcher boy a belted earl. It is hardly possible to overrate the value of an expectation of this kind in enabling the ordinary man of business to maintain his struggle against the monotony of his career, and it lends a new and nonpolitical significance to that time-honored ejaculation of toryism: "Thank God, we have a house of lords."

Even apart from the contingency of an unexpected succession, our happily regulated peerage law provides for other surprises of an almost equally thrilling nature. Compelled to rank as commoners, the kinsmen of peers not only become sharers in all those chances of fortune to which that large and mainly undistinguished class of persons are liable, but may continue to do so indefinitely without arousing any suspicion of their identity.

Such, according to a contemporary, has been the experience of a scion of the peerage, who is nearly related to the holder of the premier barony of Ireland. Little more than a week ago the passengers on board the Peninsular and Oriental mail steamer Britannia were breakfasting, lunching and dining in the first-class saloon of the vessel and listening to the sweet strains of its band after dinner, in entire unconsciousness that among those who were assisting to fill their glasses and to delight their ears was the Hon. Robert Charles Sinclair de Courcy, only surviving brother of the thirty-third Lord Kingsale. Strange that in these days of telepathy, of thought transmission and other mysterious forms of communication between one human being and another there should have been no one present to whom the proximity of this descendant of an ancient line of nobles revealed itself as a fact of "subliminal consciousness!"

Was there no sentimental maiden of Irish extraction to whom it was whispered by an inner voice that the courteous attendant who offered her dry curry and Bombay duck was the thirty-third in descent from that stout earl of Ulster who was invited in the early years of the thirteenth century to exhibit his mighty strength in the presence of King John and Philip Augustus of France and cleft a massive helmet in twain at a single blow? Apparently there was not.

The curry and Bombay duck went around; the other courses followed in due order; the repast was finished, the table cleared and the sprig of the ancient tree of nobility retired to appear again shortly afterward as a bandsman, musical instrument in hand, but with identity still wrapped in mystery. Night after night this must have happened to the first saloon passengers on the P. and O. steamer, and now the golden opportunity of recognizing the brother of the premier baron of Ireland is lost to them forever. He has unexpointed by King John on his accession to the throne. The earl of Ulster was treacherously seized while performing penance, unarmed and barefooted, in the churchyard of Downpatrick on violent form. A little earlier in his career than the time of his helmet-cleaving performance his splendor and rank had excited the envy of Hugh de Lacie, the new governor of Ireland, appetedly succeeded to a legacy of £900 a year and hands around curry and Bombay duck no more.

His ancestor, the stout earl of Ulster, had himself experienced the ups and downs of fortune, though in a less Good Friday, 1203, and sent over to England, where the king condemned him to perpetual imprisonment in the tower and granted away all his Irish possessions to his enemy. A year afterward he offered himself as English champion in the dispute which had arisen between John and Philip Augustus concerning the duchy of Normandy, and it was after having put his French adversary to ignominious flight—thus conclusively proving that the legal rights of the English crown were superior to those of France—that he performed the marvelous feat of strength above referred to.

By a process of reasoning analogous to that which had settled the merits of the Anglo-French controversy, King John at once perceived the justice of restoring the earl to his title and estates, and further promised to grant him any request with which it should be within the royal power to comply. John de Courcy was moderate in his demands. He had, he said, titles and estates enough, and he asked that his successors might be accorded the privilege, their first obeisance being paid, of remaining covered in the presence of the king and of all future sovereigns of England. The request was immediately granted, and for considerably more than 600 years the earls of Kingsale have possessed, though doubtless they have more often waived than exercised, the singular privilege. The hero of this last sudden change of fortune is at present removed by but one life from the title on the demise of its present holder. He has come near, therefore, to having experienced the extraordinary change from the position of a man who was practically bound to take off his hat to large numbers of her majesty's subjects to that of a man who is entitled to wear it in a presence in which it is the duty of almost all the rest of the queen's liege to uncover their heads.

IS HARTFORD PREHISTORIC?

Strange Discovery of Wood Far Below the Earth Surface.

A discovery was made by several workmen at the new building of Sage, Allen & Co. the other day which leads them to believe that Hartford is a prehistoric town, says the Hartford Courant. The men were working a 900-pound drill for an elevator plunger shaft when suddenly they struck something about fifty-four feet below the level of Main street upon which the drill seemed to have no effect, although it struck the substance with a pressure of 3,000 pounds. The men pounded at the substance for some time, but made but little headway, and it was decided to take the drill from the plunger shaft and put it in a pan to see if it could be learned what was underneath the drill. The pan was put in and the men on the drill were surprised to see that when they took the pan to the surface it contained a quantity of wood. After it was found to be wood the drill was put back and the drilling was resumed. The men were surprised at the slow headway that was being made, and from the time they first made the discovery, two weeks ago, until Saturday noon they have been boring through nothing but wood. The drill was sixty-five feet in the ground when it finally passed through the wood, and it is a mystery to the men on the drill how so much wood got to be so far below the surface. The wood was away below hard-pan, and the men on the drill, who have bored considerable distances into the earth before, say that they never discovered wood so far beneath the surface. The fact that it was there in such quantities is what causes an additional surprise to them. The wood was taken out in small bits, and the great quantities of fine shavings lying about the drilling apparatus give an idea of the amount of wood that was chopped by the drill. The wood is considerably decayed, and it would take an expert woodsman to determine what kind it is. The shaft for the plunger will be drilled 100 feet and six inches below the level of Main street.

Washington Irving's Love Story.

Washington Irving always remained single because Matilda Hoffman, the beautiful girl to whom he was engaged, died of consumption in her 17th year. He says: "I was by her when she died, and was the last she ever looked upon." He took her Bible and Prayer Book away with him, sleeping with them under his pillow, and in all his subsequent travels they were his inseparable companions. Not until 30 years after her death did any one venture to speak of her to him. He was visiting her father, and one of her nieces, taking some music from a drawer, brought with it a piece of embroidery. "Washington," said Mr. Hoffman, "this was from Matilda's work." The effect was electric. He had been talking gaily the moment before, but became silent and soon left the house.

Testing Them.

Alexander Hamilton, when slavery existed to a limited extent on Manhattan island, bought a number for the purpose of emancipating him. At the first meeting of the Emancipation Society of the city of New York, Hamilton attended at the request of Lafayette, who desired to become an honorary member. "Gentlemen," said Hamilton, coming straight to the point, "in token of our sincerity, let every person here emancipate his slaves now." The members were astonished at the application of this severe test. Not one was willing to submit to it. Hamilton, seeing that his proposition met with general disapproval, took his hat and left the building.

A Sure Sign.

"Have you noticed how Whiggs jokes with the landlady these hot days?" "Yes; he has either paid his bill or else he hasn't."—Detroit Free Press.